

Bonsai Foundations Program 2024

The almost annual Foundations Program started about 10 years ago to address a need for some more formal training in the basics of bonsai cultivation, training and styling. There are a number of Introductory Bonsai classes where students can get the 'basics in a day' and come home with a wired tree, but no idea what to do with it next.

The Foundations program weighted more towards the principles and information necessary for the long term development of bonsai.

Curriculum:

The curriculum has been designed with the following outcomes in mind for students:

- An introduction to bonsai philosophy, heritage, conventions and aesthetic;
- A working knowledge of how plants grow and develop, and how to harness these natural processes in the interests of bonsai development;
- An understanding of styling alternatives and how to choose;
- Early experience in developing bonsai and an understanding of development pathways.

Three streams of content will run through the program; *Bonsai practice and styling conventions*, *how to work with plants* (horticulture) and the *application of artistic expression*.

This year it is planned to have 8 lessons and 2 workshops, something like the following:

Lesson 1

Program introduction
Origins & philosophy of bonsai culture
History and different national identities (schools of bonsai)
Classification, Styles & Sizes
Stylistic conventions and 'rules of bonsai' - the general aesthetic principles
The art of illusion

Lesson 2

Selection of plants suitable to bonsai
Attributes
Recommended species
Tools and accessories
Physiological aspects – functions of roots, leaves, bark and how trees grow
Channelling this physiology for bonsai development
How to keep a plant alive in a pot for years
Trees to work on

Lesson 3

Potting mediums and components
Watering and general care
Seasonal influences and the annual cycle
Start on development pathways – where to begin, seed to advanced stock.

Lesson 4

Bonsai development pathways continuing
Shaping & Wiring
Defoliation

Lesson 5

Propagation methods
Sourcing bonsai material
Cuttings and grafting, layering

Lesson 6

Fertilizer – nutrients
Pests and diseases
Insects and fungus

Lesson 7

Containers
Exhibition
Bonsai on line
Review

Lesson 8 (Usually conducted in early August)

Transplanting and re-potting
Root pruning

Workshop1 and Workshop 2

Will be held at times to suit the schedule and venue opportunities.

Class Schedule/Location

Due to other commitments the program will likely be run this year on Sunday afternoons, 1pm to 4pm.

Program dates will be set once sufficient nominations are received to run the course and book the venue. Exact dates then are subject to venue availability. In 2023 the program was conducted at the Thorneside Community Hall, 200 Mooroondu Rd, Thorneside.

Again subject to nominations, it is hoped that we might make a start in March and run through to August/Sept.

Fees and costs:

The fee for the program is be \$160 for RBS members (\$185 for non-members) for the 8 lessons and 2 workshops.

A deposit of \$50 should be paid on nomination with the balance payable at the first class.

The Book 'Bonsai Foundations', covers the course content and will be available for purchase if you are interested (\$30) but this is not essential.

Nomination:

If you are interested in participating, please nominate with Steve Cullum directly at spcullum@gmail.com. By all means get in touch if you have other questions. If you do get in touch to confirm participation or ask questions, please make sure your message identifies yourself. Sometimes an email address alone doesn't make it clear who I'm talking to. Your phone number would be useful too, for future contact.

Thanks

Steve Cullum